



NBN at 20 – Changing Times

Clare Blencowe, ALERC Director & former Chair

IMAGE © Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre: drone team on a site survey



Linking Local Record Centres

The Linking Local Record Centres Project

The Linking Local Record Centres (LRCs) Project, led by The Wildlife Trusts, aims to establish a UK wide network of LRCs. When linked to other data holders through the NBN, this will provide a more complete local and national picture of biodiversity information.

To achieve this work, we have been focussing on developing a structured approach for the establishment of effective LRCs. This is based on the preparation of a development plan which is underpinned by a careful analysis of the needs of potential users. These users include a wide range of organisations and other groups such as local authorities, statutory conservation agencies, voluntary conservation bodies and recorders. The activities needed to run the LRC to meet those needs are then determined together with a framework for the LRC status, management and operation and funding mechanisms. This approach is being tested through three pilot LRCs and guidance on establishing an LRC was published in April 1999.

Liz Halliwell, LRC Support Officer, in *Proceedings from the Sussex Biological Recorders' Seminar*, 1999

1998 - 2001

Technology



Hard at work at Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre: Lawrence Way (now of JNCC), date unknown

Photo supplied by Abigail Pedlow (BRERC), probably taken by Charles Copp

Services



Visit to BIS – Biodiversity Information Service for Powys & Brecon Beacons National Park – of the then Environment Minister (subsequently First Minister of Wales), Carwyn Jones, 2004

Photo supplied by Adam Rowe (SEWBREC)

Position statement on Local Record Centres

Sustainable development seeks to integrate environmental and economic decisions. This requires access to relevant information about the environment, so that decision makers can identify the impacts of activities and avoid adverse effects on wildlife and natural features. Equally, policies and programmes that have environmental objectives need information to help target them appropriately. Access to relevant and up to date information on wildlife and natural features is essential. Whilst policy can be informed by aggregations and summaries of the relevant data, decisions on individual programmes and projects require information on specific areas. This needs to be obtained, verified, stored and then provided locally.

A large volume of data exists about wildlife and natural features. Lots of information is regularly collected: many people are involved in collecting more. Most is held in a variety of dispersed forms and is hard to access. We need simple ways of storing the data, once, in a way that allows many subsequent uses. Data collectors need support to help them collect and store data to required standards. Data also needs to be collected and stored in ways that allow it to be used many times for different purposes. This requires well designed and co-ordinated survey and monitoring programmes that integrate national needs with local requirements. A reliable network of Local Record Centres will help achieve these objectives.

English Nature supports the establishment of the National Biodiversity Network. The National Biodiversity Network is designed to improve information needed for the Biodiversity Action Plan and to support the reporting requirements of the Habitats and Species Directive whilst meeting local needs for information. The intention is to establish a network of local and national centres to support recording, to manage the data and provide access to users to agreed standards and conditions.

May 1998

People



Launch of Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
at the Gilbert White Field Studies with Sir John Burnett, 2002

Photo supplied by Nicky Court (HBIC)



Places



Recording day at Powdermill Wood organised by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, 2005

Photo by Charles Roper

Networks



The Vision

- Establish a computerised network of biological information covering the whole of the UK
- Prepare publicly accessible overviews,
- Develop standards for the collection and indexing of information,
- Facilitate social inclusion through community access to information and education,
- Facilitate conservation management

Sharing Information about Wildlife



**Here's to
the next
20 years!**